

Like many others in the Society, I have a particular passion for perfin on Queen Victoria 1d Reds, thus it was a pleasant surprise to receive a letter from Phil Butcher enclosing three interesting examples for me to inspect (illustrated below).

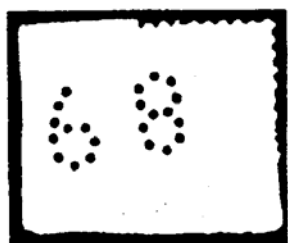


plate 136

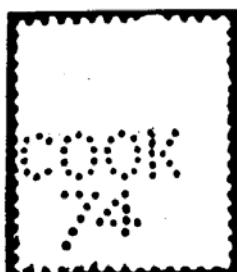


plate 172



plate 120

Fortunately, paper still attached to the back of the stamps shows that the perforations had been applied through the envelope and after the stamp had been affixed - probably after having been postally used. Thus they are not 'true' perfins, but interesting none-the-less. In the case of the two examples with 'COOK' showing, it would appear that Slopers made a number of similar dies during 1874 and 1875 specifically for use as 'Coupon' dies. Illustrated below is the strike from their Impression Book for m/c No. 4186, dated 21/5/1874. Other similar machines were made for use abroad, 'America' being specifically mentioned.



The very next entry in the Impression Book is for COOKS/TOURS (m/c No. 4184), so it would be reasonable to assume that the particular Cook in question was Thomas Cook (1808-1892) of travel and tour fame and that the 'Coupons' were something to do with the ticketing arrangements. '74' clearly relates to the year 1874. However, the '68' (or '89') is more of an enigma because the plate involved is 136. As this was not put to press until 1870, it makes 1868 too early and 1889 too late!